

ARTICLE ALERT

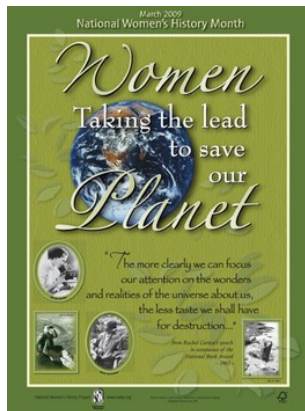


INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER, U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA

Volume 3, March 2009

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, 2009



Logo for the Women's History Month 2009 theme, *Women Taking the Lead to Save our Planet*

Every March in the United States, National Women's History Month celebrates the contributions of women to the nation's history and culture. This year's theme "honors women who have taken the lead in the environmental or 'green' move-

ment," according to the National Women's History Project (NWHHP), an educational nonprofit group based in California. Rachel Carson is "the iconic model" for the theme.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH HONOREES HELPED OUT MOTHER NATURE

The Women's History Month honorees include scientists, engineers, politicians, writers and filmmakers, conservationists, teachers, community organizers, religious or workplace leaders, businesswomen and others who took action to help heal the planet — some by promoting legislation and education, and others by getting their hands dirty planting trees and picking up trash.

UNITED STATES ALSO CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Each year, the president issues a proclamation calling on all citizens to observe March as National Women's History Month, as well as a separate proclamation on International Women's Day, March 8. The worldwide celebration, begun in 1975 by the United Nations, recognizes women's achievements, highlights issues of common concern and focuses on ending discrimination and increasing support for women's full and equal participation in society. In 2009, the theme is Women and Men United to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

Read more at: <http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/diversity/diversity--offering-a-place-for-everyone.html>

About the IRC

The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center (IRC) in Jakarta is a specialized Reference and Research Library. Its goal is to provide accurate, up-to-date information to the public about topics such as U.S. foreign policy, legislation, social issues, economics and trade. High speed Internet computers, printer and photo copier are provided at the IRC for library users.

Books, articles, and websites described in the Article Alert present a diversity of views in order to keep our IRC users abreast of current issues in the United States. These items represent the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official U.S. Government policy.

Non-Violent Paths to Social Change

The past 30 years have seen a surge of nonviolent, "people power" movements around the world advancing human rights and toppling repressive rulers. This edition of eJournal USA demonstrates that nonviolent actions can be more powerful than armed insurrections in bringing about social change.

Available online at:

<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0309.html>

MORE COVERAGE

DEMOCRACY AND AROUND THE WORLD

<http://democracy.america.gov/democracy/global/index.html>



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Obama's First 100 Days

First 100 Days will follow President Obama's initiatives and policy directions.

<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>

Webcast with Charlie Cook, March 11, 10:30 EDT (14:30 GMT)

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html#031>

Report

GREEN JOBS: A PATHWAY TO A STRONG MIDDLE CLASS. Middle Class Task Force, Vice President of the United States. March 4, 2009.

The White House Task Force on the Middle Class has a simple mandate: to find, highlight, and implement solutions to the economic challenges facing the American middle class. The Obama Administration is committed to reforming how we create and consume energy in America, and project of reform is the work of many different officials and agencies within the government. One part of that agenda is to promote the creation of green jobs.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/mctf_one_staff_report.pdf [PDF format, 33 pages].

Democracy and Global Issues

1. Bartels, Larry **THE IRRATIONAL ELECTORATE** (Wilson Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 4, Autumn 2008, pp. 44-50)

The author notes that one of the best-selling political books of the 2008 election season was **JUST HOW STUPID ARE WE?** by popular historian Rick Shenkman, presenting results from opinion surveys documenting Americans' lack of knowledge about politics, government, and American history. When social scientists started using detailed opinion surveys to study the attitudes and behavior of ordinary voters in the early 1950s, they found that voters consistently misperceived where candidates stood on the important issues of the day, seeing their favorite candidates' positions as closer to their own and those of opposing candidates' stands as more dissimilar than they actually were. The ideal of rational voting behavior is further undermined by accumulating

evidence that voters can be powerfully swayed by television advertising in the days just before an election. Currently available online at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=478918

2. Starr, Paul **GOODBYE TO THE AGE OF NEWSPAPERS (HELLO TO A NEW ERA OF CORRUPTION)** (New Republic, March 4, 2009)

Corruption in government, business and journalism may rise with the demise of newspapers, says Starr. "Despite all the development of other media, the fact is that newspapers in recent years have continued to field the majority of reporters and to produce most of the original news stories in cities across the country," he writes. "Online there is certainly a great profusion of opinion, but there is little reporting, and still less of it subject to any rigor-

ous fact-checking or editorial scrutiny." With the reduction of solid investigative reporting and the weakening of the "watchdog" role of the press, corruption in government and in business will rise, Starr says. With fewer professional journalists and more "citizen journalists" -- some, no doubt, paid by special interests -- there is the danger of corruption taking hold in journalism itself. All of this, he says, bodes badly for the future of democracy. Starr predicts the emerging electronic news media seem likely to become more fragmented by interest and partisanship. Those with the skills to take advantage of the new world of news will be pleased with the broader range of publications; those without will learn less about the world. Currently available online at <http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=a4e2aafc-cc92-4e79-90d1-db3946a6d119>

Economic Issues

3. Katz, Richard **THE JAPAN FALLACY: TODAY'S U.S. FINANCIAL CRISIS IS NOT LIKE TOKYO'S "LOST DECADE"** (Foreign Affairs, vol. 88, no. 2, March-April 2009)

According to Katz, comparing the U.S. financial crisis to Japan's decade-long slump is a mistake. "The cause of the current crisis is fundamentally different, its scope is far smaller, and the response of policymakers has been quicker and more effective," Katz says. Japan's

economy, its producers and consumers protected from competition by government policy, was dysfunctional through and through, leading eventually to a banking crisis. The U.S. banking crisis, on the other hand, resulted from government failure to regulate subprime mortgages, corporate executive compensation, and the derivatives market. The financial status of U.S. nonfinancial companies is much healthier than their Japanese

counterparts were. The U.S. government acted quickly to reverse the crisis; the Japanese reaction was characterized by "denial, dithering, and delay." Japan needed to overhaul its political and economic institutions; the United States needs only to correct its regulatory mistakes. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20090301facomment88202/richard-katz/the-japan-fallacy.html>

International Security

4. Gates, Robert M. **A BALANCED STRATEGY: REPROGRAMMING THE PENTAGON FOR A NEW AGE** (Foreign Affairs, vol. 88, no. 1, January/February 2009, pp. 28-40)

Defense Secretary Gates writes that U.S. credibility would be dealt a disastrous blow if we were to fail, or be perceived to fail, in Iraq or Afghanistan. As an active participant in U.S. national security decisions for 42 years, the author writes that the U.S. is unlikely to pursue another "forced regime change followed by nation-building under fire anytime soon." In the future, he says the U.S. should take an indirect approach, whenever possible, by building up the capacity of partner governments and security forces "to prevent festering problems from turning into cri-

ses that require costly and controversial direct military intervention." Whenever possible, he also says, military operations should be subordinated to efforts designed to promote better governance, economic development, and programs to address grievances of the discontented -- a ready pool from which terrorists recruit. He laments the whole scale downsizing of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the folding of the U.S. Information Agency "into a corner of the State Department." Gates says the military and civilian elements of national security are out of balance, and that the cultural, political, psychological and human dimensions of warfare must not be neglected.

5. Pearlman, Wendy **SPOILING INSIDE AND OUT: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTESTA-**

TION AND THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

(International Security, vol. 33, no. 3, Winter 2008/2009, pp. 79-109)

Pearlman, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University, writes that parties to a conflict turn to negotiating or spoiling as a means of contesting not only what a proposed peace settlement entails but also who has the power to decide the terms. Conflicts are more likely to witness negotiating and spoiling to the extent that one or both of the warring parties lack a system of legitimate representation. Whether internal contestation leads a group to act as a peace maker or peace breaker is conditioned by its position in the internal balance of power.

Peace & Security

Here is a brief list of recent essays and commentary about foreign affairs and national security issues from public policy research centers as selected by researchers and editors of America.gov.

Available online at:

<http://fpolicy.america.gov/fpolicy/security/index.html>

U.S. Society and Values

6. Fischer, Karin **U.S. COLLEGES GET SERIOUS WITH PARTNERS OVERSEAS** (Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 55, No. 25, February 27, 2009, pp. A1, A28-A29)

Some U.S. universities are focusing more on the depth of their relationships with institutions in other countries than on the numbers. Fischer's prime example is Washington University in St. Louis, which has sought to build a network of outstanding institutions united by a common research agenda. Washington University's Chancellor, Mark Wrigh-

ton, says his university and its partners are looking for significant topics on which they share outstanding faculty expertise and can have both a global and a local impact. Significant money is being invested in the network, with a \$100 million endowment the goal. For its "clean coal" collaboration, for example, Washington University faculty are competing for \$1.25 million in research grants each of which must involve a colleague at an overseas partner. The network partners also plan to exchange course content and develop

curricula that can be taught jointly. Last year, for example, Washington University students joined counterparts from Peking and Tsinghua Universities in studying air quality during the Olympics. While other university leaders acknowledge the need to get away from "handshake-and-paper agreements" that have no institutional impact, they raise the issue of whether the kind of sophisticated, substantive relationships being developed by Washington University are realistic for institutions with fewer resources.

Report

MINI-DIGEST OF EDUCATION STATISTICS 2008. National Center for Education Statistics. March 2009.

The publication is a pocket-sized compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of American education from kindergarten through graduate school. The statistical highlights are excerpts from the Digest of Education of Statistics, 2008.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009021.pdf> [PDF format, 77 pages].

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Special Offers:

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*Rachel Carson,
1907-1964
Biologist & Writer*

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH:
WOMEN TAKING THE LEAD
TO SAVE OUR PLANET.
Library of Congress. March 2009.**

<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>

The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in paying tribute to the generations of women whose commitment to nature and the planet have proved invaluable to society.

To know more about Rachel Carson please visit:
<http://www.america.gov/publications/books/rachel-carson-pen-against-poison.html>